



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO RECOGNIZE MORE THAN 200  
ONE MILLION DEGREES GRADUATES**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Chancellor Juan Salgado and CEO of One Million Degrees Paige Ponder at the One Million Degrees Scholar Awards and Graduation to recognize more than 200 City Colleges of Chicago graduates. One Million Degrees is dedicated to providing comprehensive supports to low-income community college students to help them succeed in school, work and in life.

“One Million Degrees provides essential supports to our students, and helps them to access the opportunities to participate and succeed in the 21st century economy,” said Mayor Emanuel. “This year’s graduates join hundreds of residents across the city who are now equipped with the academic and business skills necessary to reach their full potential.”

Scholars graduate at more than twice the state average within three years. Participating scholars receive support in four critical areas: personal, academic, financial, and professional. Participating scholars develop the job readiness skills that make them great employees, and learn to value team work, create actionable goals from feedback and take accountability for their own success. Scholars also receive professional coaching along the way to help ensure they graduate with the skills needed to excel in their chosen fields.

“It is an honor to recognize our talented, tireless scholar graduates tonight,” said Paige Ponder, CEO of One Million Degrees. “Each community college graduate sends ripple effects to the students’ children and their families, their communities, and the Illinois economy as a whole.”

One Million Degrees serves 800 community college students throughout the Chicagoland area.

“When we ask our students what made the difference as they worked to complete their City Colleges degree, we often hear it was the support they received from One Million Degrees,” said Chancellor Salgado. “Our partnership works, and that is the reason why OMD's

relationship with City Colleges has grown over the last 13 years, and now serves hundreds of students at all seven of our colleges.”

One Million Degrees is partnering with the University of Chicago Urban Labs to conduct a randomized controlled trial to measure the impact of the One Million Degrees Program on college and career success.

In 2017, One Million Degrees expanded its commitment to support opportunities for Chicago area community college students through OMD Works, an initiative to create partnerships with employers to identify and meet growing demands for workers. It helps companies draw upon the deep, diverse and highly-motivated talent pool of community college students, leading to apprenticeships, internships and full-time employment.

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